

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 IO-13 /086 W
-----051931Z 020348 /43

R 051728Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8038
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: THE DECLINE AND FALL OF JUSO CHAIRMAN
BENNETER

REFS: A. BONN 7258; B. BONN 5056

BEGIN SUMMARY: AFTER HASTY BUT QUALIFIED PLEDGES OF
SOLIDARITY WITH DEPOSED JUSO CHAIRMAN BENNETER, THE
MAJOR JUSO GROUPS HAVE MOVED TO JETTISON HIS MORE
AWKWARD POSITIONS AND TO REAFFIRM THEIR ROLE IN THE SPD
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FAMILY. SPD INSIDERS TELL US THAT THE GRASS-ROOTS HAS
HAILED THE SACKING OF BENNETER. THEY PREDICT THAT
BENNETER WILL BE FORMALLY EXPELLED, AND THAT A FEW OF
HIS MORE YOUTHFUL AND/OR IMMATURE SUPPORTERS WILL
FOLLOW HIM OUT OF THE PARTY. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE PAST FEW DAYS WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE BENNETER

CASE WITH A NUMBER OF SPD AND JUSO CONTACTS. WHAT EMERGES IS A CLEAR SENSE THAT THE "MODERATE" JUSO WING, NARROWLY DEFEATED AT THE HAMBURG CONGRESS LAST MARCH (REF B), IS NOW REGAINING THE UPPER HAND. THESE "MODERATES" ARE FULLY PREPARED TO CROSS SWORDS WITH THE SPD ON BASIC ISSUES, BUT THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT BENNETER CHOSE BOTH WRONG ISSUES AND POOR TACTICS IN PURSUING THEM.

2. THERE WAS, TO BE SURE, AN INITIAL WAVE OF JUSO SYMPATHY FOR BENNETER AND HOSTILITY TO THE SPD'S HARSH TREATMENT OF HIM. HOWEVER, THIS REACTION HAS GIVEN WAY TO A MORE SOBER AWARENESS OF THE STAKES INVOLVED AND THE NEED FOR JUSO UNITY IN THE SPD RANKS. JUST AFTER THE SPD ANNOUNCEMENT LAST WEEK (REF A), THE JUSO DIRECTORATE ISSUED A STATEMENT OF QUALIFIED SUPPORT FOR ITS DEPOSED CHAIRMAN. THE JUSO NATIONAL COMMITTEE, REPRESENTING ALL JUSO DISTRICTS IN THE FRG, MET LAST WEEKEND. BY A VOTE OF 14 TO 6, IT PASSED A RESOLUTION WHICH GIVES A MASSIVE REBUKE TO BENNETER IN THREE PARTICULARS: (A) JUSO'S DO NOT REGARD MEMBERSHIP IN THE SPD AS A TACTICAL QUESTION; (B) JUSO'S RULE OUT THE NOTION OF COLLABORATION WITH DOMESTIC COMMUNIST GROUPS SUCH AS THE DKP; AND (C) JUSO'S MUST NOT LET "ABSTRACT ALLIANCE QUESTIONS" DOMINATE THEIR DEBATE WITH THE SPD.

3. SPD SOURCES STRESS THAT THE PARTY WILL NOT BACK DOWN FROM ITS HARDLINE MOVE AGAINST BENNETER. THEY PREDICT THAT BENNETER WILL BE FORMALLY EXPELLED IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEXT FEW WEEKS, AND THAT HE WILL LOSE ANY APPEAL HE CHOOSES TO MAKE. SOME PARTY MEMBERS SEE AT LEAST A THEORETICAL POSSIBILITY THAT BENNETER WILL TRY TO RECENT IN ORDER TO SAVE HIMSELF. SUCH A STEP, HOWEVER,

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WOULD COST HIM HIS REMAINING SUPPORT IN JUSO RANKS.

4. THAT SUPPORT, WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, IS MELTING,
ALTHOUGH THE JUSO ORGANIZATION WILL NEED SOME TIME TO
HEAL THE DIVISIONS WHICH BENNETER, AND HIS DISMISSAL,
HAVE CAUSED. SPD HEADQUARTERS TELL US THAT GRASS-ROOTS
REACTION TO THE DUMPING OF BENNETER IS RUNNING 2-1 IN
FAVOR. FORMER JUSO NATIONAL CHAIRMEN HAVE BEGUN TO RAKE
BENNETER OVER THE COALS IN PUBLIC, DISCUSSING HIM IN THE
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PAST TENSE AS AN ABERRATION BEST FORGOTTEN. ON THE
BASIS OF TALKS AT THE SPD ENERGY CONFERENCE IN COLOGNE
LAST WEEK, WE CAN CONFIRM THAT A NUMBER OF OLDER
MEMBERS, LONG NEEDLED BY JUSO'S IN GENERAL, SHOW A
VISCERAL JOY OVER BENNETER'S FATE AND THE ROLE WHICH
EGON BAHR PLAYED IN ARRANGING IT. THIS IS ONE REASON
WHY BAHR HAS HAD TO WARN LOCAL SPD ORGANIZATIONS NOT TO
USE THE BENNETER CASE AS AN EXCUSE TO SETTLE OLD SCORES
WITH JUSO'S.

5. THE SPD HOPES THAT FIRMNESS WILL BRING MOST OF THE
AMORPHOUS STAMOKAP GROUP BACK INTO LINE, BUT IT EXPECTS

THAT SOME OF THE MORE RADICAL AND/OR IMMATURE JUSO'S
WILL FOLLOW BENNETER OUT OF THE PARTY. SPD CHAIRMAN
BRANDT AND BUNDESTAG FRAKTION CHIEF WEHNER HAVE TAKEN
A TOUGH PUBLIC LINE ON THIS POINT (CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT
HAS BEEN RELATIVELY SILENT). INDICATIVELY, WEHNER USED A RECENT
INTERVIEW TO WARN ALL JUSO'S AGAINST SIDING WITH
BENNETER, ADDING THAT THE SPD WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT
TO MOVE AGAINST THEM TOO IF THEY, LIKE BENNETER,
"TRAMPLE ON THE GODESBERG PROGRAM."
STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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